

October 12, 1976

REMARKS TO THE PRESS BY THE
FOREIGN MINISTER OF MAURITIUS,
SIR HAROLD EDWARD WALTER,
AFTER HIS MEETING WITH SECRETARY KISSINGER
OCTOBER 12, 1976

QUESTION: We wondered if you could tell us a little bit about your talks today with the Secretary. They centered on Rhodesia? Was that the subject?

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: Well, quite a wide range covering Zimbabwe, Namibia, and the surrounding factors affecting both problems--South Africa, but we left South Africa in the belief that we should cross the bridge when we meet it. We cannot chew everything at the same time. We discussed the achievements of the Secretary of State in the light of the numerous misinterpretations which have been given to certain facets of the statement of the rebel Smith, of the nationalist leaders of both countries, and the interpretation of both Britain and the United States. I believe the discussions were very fruitful and meaty. As a matter of fact, I practically spent an hour and a half with the Secretary of State. He was very kind to give me so much time, but I am sure you do not want me to reveal all the tenets of the discussion which can only do harm to my meeting with the African group as I am chairman of the Council of Ministers of the OAU. If I reveal it to the press now before meeting my colleagues. I think as a matter of courtesy it would be right that I put the interpretation that the Secretary of State gave, to my colleagues first on both problems. But all I can tell you in general terms, not the usual answer to journalists, they have been very fruitful, very constructive, and I think that it has been very useful leading to an acceptance from all parts--

QUESTION: What do you mean by that?

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: --at least the beginning of the conference for Zimbabwe where, with the momentum that the conference will get, I am sure the different points we have discussed will turn out to be towards a quick achievement of the three principles laid down by Dr. Kissinger, and to which Mr. Smith agreed.

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QUESTION: So the reports in the press that there were problems with the conference are unfounded.

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: I wouldn't say they were unfounded.

QUESTION: I mean major problems.

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: I wouldn't say they are unfounded. They exist, but I think it was Christopher (inaudible) who said, "The press is written in a hurry and it must be read in a hurry." Am I right?

QUESTION: I am not really sure. I am just wondering if you could give us an idea of the reports that come out reflecting statements that officials make suggesting that there isn't a smooth course toward a conference-- right or wrong.

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: Constitutional conferences throughout the years have always had different factions present at the conference, one disagreeing with the other. But, once they are at the conference table, and the main objective is to get everybody at the conference table, irrespective of the fact whether they come united or disunited, because on the basic principles they all agree. I have talked to Bishop Muzorewa, I have talked to Nkomo, and unfortunately I could not reach Moputo to reach Mr. Mugabe, and the heads of state of the front line states have made their position very clear. I think there is absolutely no disunity on the basic principles.

QUESTION: Mr. Minister, do you think Smith's regime should be represented at that conference?

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: I believe it is a fact which we have got to accept, and they will be represented. There is a lot of, I would say, talk about he should not be there at all, but we must be pragmatic in life. You've got to accept it as a fact, and I think we must ensure that the three basic principles are fulfilled, and this is the whole aim of it.

QUESTION: Have you been asked to convey some message to the OAU, or at least to help your Prime Minister Thursday, in making a declaration about what you referred to as (inaudible).

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FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: Oh, not at all. Not at all. We have only discussed the problems, there has been no pressure on me, there has been no suggestion that my Prime Minister should orientate his speech in this light or in that one. We are absolutely independent. The Secretary of State wanted to see me just to brief me on the latest position, and to hear my views on the different problems out of which discussions ensued, and as I told you, the discussions have been very fruitful and I would even say conclusive.

QUESTION: Thank you, sir.

FOREIGN MINISTER WALTER: Not at all.